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EDMONTON BULLETIN, MARCH 14, 1891.

THE TERRITORIAL ELECTIONS

It seems to have been generally taken for granted before the late election that the Northwest would return four government supporters; but it was not generally expected that the return would be by such immense majorities as have been recorded the old members. Alberta and Assinibola put up no opposition candidate, and the attempt to change the party representation has utterly failed. In Eastern Assinibola and Saskatchewan the opposition candidates have been defeated by large majorities. To people living outside the Territories, who hear from time to time and from every quarter of the Northwest, complaints of government mismanagement, it must seem strange to see that same government so strongly, and indeed almost unanimously endorsed. It tends very greatly to lessen the force of any complaints that may be made in future and to lessen the interest that outsiders might feel in the Territories if they saw that the people were prepared to defend at the polls what between elections they claim as their rights. The complaints against the government are: Its restrictive land policy; its dilatory railway policy and its retrogressive local government policy. That these three complaints are well founded everyone acquainted with the Northwest well knows. It may be said that these several policies are dictated by force of circumstances, and that present conditions are being improved as fast as possible. This may all be true, but it does not make the actual pinch any the less on the people interested—therefore they kick when they feel the pinch. The reason that they do not kick more vigorously when election day arrives is because they have no assurance that if the opposition attained power to-morrow they would do any better in these respects than the government is doing. The liberal leaders have never made a study of the Northwest or its affairs, have never championed its cause or that of its settlers—more than to score a point for the party when opportunity offered—and indeed have permitted themselves to rest under the belief that they are anything but friends of the Northwest. Whatever may be the shortcomings of the government party, they at least profess an interest in the Territories, which the opposition does not even profess. Under the circumstances the people of the Territories can scarcely be expected to enthrone much over a prospective change of government, or to give a majority in favor of it. If the opposition desire support in the Northwest at a future election let them become informed on Northwest questions, take an interest in Northwest matters, and lay down a progressive Northwest policy. Then, and not until then, they may expect Northwest support.

Outside the question of policy, however, there are other and less creditable reasons which weighed heavily in favor of the straight government candidates in the recent election. One was the shortness of the time intervening between the announcement of dissolution and election day. In these the largest constituents in Canada less time is allowed than in Gaspé or Cariboo. The contest covered little more than four weeks. The sitting member, who was also in all cases the government candidate, had the full four weeks in which to work up his case, while his opponent could not possibly have more than three or two; and in the case of Mr. Tweed in Western Assinibola, had only the single week between nomination and election. When it is considered that it was a physical impossibility for the opponents of the straight government candidates to properly organize their forces in the time allowed, or even to get themselves well before the constituency, the wonder at the vast majority rolled up against them lessens very much.

Another feature of the case is the disproportionately large vote in the Territories di-

rectly and indirectly under government influence. The Territories cannot complain of an insufficiency of public officers. There are not more than circumstances require, owing to sparse settlement. But there are enough to do the public business were the population three times what it is. It is only reasonable to suppose that the votes of the officials of the government are cast for the government candidate. There is also the mounted police force of about 1,000 men and casting the same number of votes. While the policeman is less dependent upon the favor of the government than the official he has not as a rule the personal interest in the Territories such as the official usually has in common with other residents, he therefore does not look at the election from the same standpoint as the settler and cannot be expected to cast his vote the same way. Add to the official vote, and the police vote the C. P. R. vote, which is strictly controllable under the present system of open voting; set against that the comparatively small settlers' vote of the Territories; and it will be seen what an immense majority of settlers' votes a candidate would require in order to beat the government nominee who is backed by the solid votes and influence of the three classes above mentioned.

The hopelessness of contending against these influences was so apparent that—no matter how objectionable the government candidate was—many electors looked upon a contest as useless, and as a waste of energy, and therefore declined to take part in it. This feeling added greatly to the majorities of the government candidates.

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ST. ALBERT ROAD.

THE FAR NORTH.

Warburton M. Pike, hunter and traveller, left for Calgary on Tuesday, returning from an extended hunting trip on the Barren Grounds of the far north. Mr. Pike owns a ranch on an island near Victoria, B. C. and is known all over British Columbia as an enthusiastic and successful sportsman. In the spring of 1889 he determined to seek a new sporting field and to try his skill on a new and strange variety of game. He celebrated musk oxen of the vast Barren Grounds of Arctic America. He passed through Edmonton in June 1889 and taking passage on the H. B. steamer Athabasca at the Landing and afterwards on the Graham at Fort McMurray he went down the Athabasca and Great Slave rivers to Fort Resolution, where the latter river enters Great Slave lake. On the 20th of August he left Resolution in a canoe with a party of Indian and Indian hunters and their families who were on the way to the place of their fall hunt for the reindeer or caribou of the Barren Grounds, which forms the main subsistence of the scanty population of the far north. They sailed or paddled north-eastwardly from Fort Resolution to a point on the north shore of Great Slave lake, about 150 miles from Fort Resolution. Leaving the women and children there the men of the party, four half breeds, one Indian and Mr. Pike, portaged their canoes about eight miles over a comparatively high mountain range and reached the waters of a chain of lakes which stretches far to the north. The shores of the Great Slave lake are very rocky, chiefly granite of a formation similar to that north of lake Superior with a light growth of spruce, birch and willow. There are many islands in the lake, rocky like the coast and similarly wooded. The chain of lakes traversed lies in a country of a nature similar to the shores of the Great Slave lake. Small timber is found for about 100 miles from the coast, more scanty with the distance to the north. The remainder of the distance to the height of land between the waters of Great Slave lake and those of the Great Bear River is of a like rocky nature but with little or no wood, except small willow twigs. This is the beginning of the Barren Grounds of the north. The region is not mountainous but in parts it is so rocky and broken that even the deer avoid it. The vegetation is chiefly moss growing on the rocks—a long black variety, which is used as food by the deer and oxen and as fuel by hunters—a variety of heather growing in the crevices between the rocks and a little grass growing where there is enough soil to support it. The lakes traversed had abundance of whitefish, trout and salmon, but the Indians pay no attention to the fishery, except when the supply of deer fails. Wild fowl had already gone south before the chain of lakes was reached, but the deer, which the party were hunting, were met in myriads on their way south to the shelter of the wooded country where they winter. They go south in spring and feed all summer and produce their young on the Barren Grounds, but invariably seek the shelter of the wooded country for the winter. The Indians meet them there and slaughter them with spears from canoes as the deer swim across lakes or rivers on their course. These deer are very small, the reindeer, a species of caribou, considerably smaller than the woodland caribou and weighing about two thirds as much. The head is deer, and the nose more pointed more like the true deer than that of the woodland caribou. The horns are pointed like those of the woodland caribou, but are smaller and have more branches and points. They are very irregular in shape, no two being exactly alike. The deer are in millions and upon them the Indians pay attention, but the Indians but the chief for bearing animals of the far north, the wolf, wolverine and white fox. Although the slaughter of deer is enormous every year they are constantly decreasing, but are changing their course of migration keeping further to the eastward than formerly, so that the hunting parties of Indians which strike eastward from the Mackenzie river. The ptarmigan or white partridge is found in large numbers in winter and summer in the sparsely wooded region bordering the true Barren Grounds on the south and is quite an important source of food supply, but not so in the true Barren Grounds. The Arctic hare, considerably larger than the rabbit of the timbered part of the Northwest, is also found on the borders of the Barren Grounds but not in large numbers. Mr. Pike and the party with which he was very successful in their deer hunt and travelled slowly northward until they reached the divide between the waters of Great Slave lake and those of Great Fish river at the very last of the woods. Frost began to set in about the middle of September, but the party pushed on through the forming ice until on the 25th of September, the lakes froze up. The winter set in so quickly that on October 1st they were travelling on snow shoes. Mr. Pike camped at the point where the canoe had been frozen in until trains of dogs sent forward from Fort Resolution, after the setting in of winter, reached him. Early in November, accom-

panied by six Indians and a half breed, with three trains of dogs he set out on a hunt for musk oxen on the true Barren Grounds. The dog trains were heavily loaded, as they were compelled to carry with them all the food they needed for the whole trip, caching it as they went along for the return journey, as they could therefore carry very little provisions for either themselves or their dogs. They depended on the musk oxen which they were to find and kill for food. With all this they had no food to return with. Had they not found any they would have been reduced to great straits for food. However, they had good luck and found three bands of about 60, 80 and 20 respectively, of which they killed as many as they required. The method of hunting is very simple. As soon as a band is seen the dogs are turned loose to attack them. The oxen mistaking the dogs for wolves, herd together and defend themselves against them paying no attention to the hunters or the reports of the guns or even to the wounds inflicted. The musk ox is found only on the true Barren Grounds never coming into the woods in summer or winter. They travel over the country singly or in very small bands in summer, but in winter they herd together in larger bands, no doubt for mutual protection against wolves. The musk ox stands about four and a half to five feet in height, has heavy fore quarters, light hindquarters and short legs. An average weight would probably be about 500 pounds. It has no hump on the shoulders like a buffalo but the neck is very thick and somewhat arched. The head resembles that of a buffalo in appearance but the horns are altogether different. They start from the centre of the upper part of the forehead, spread out flat so as to give a covering of horn to that part of the animal's head, particularly in the case of bulls. On reaching the sides of the head they become round and turn downward close along the animal's jaw, until near the end of its nose, when the points turn upward. The horns after leaving the forehead are quite slim, and do not appear to be particularly well suited for weapons of defence. The outer hair of the animal is long and shaggy, so long that it almost touches the ground, making the animal's legs look even shorter than they really are. This long hair remains both in winter and summer. The inner hair is short and woolly, very close and fine, and this is cast every summer. Large patches of this wool are often found sticking to the rocks against which the musk ox has rubbed himself. The color of the robe is a lightish brown, and it is quite valuable. No doubt it will become increasingly so, but there is very little danger of the animal becoming extinct on that account like the buffalo. Unlike the buffalo the musk ox is not a denizen of food, owing to its musky flavor, and besides deer meat is better and more easily obtained. In winter when the robes are valuable, the difficulty and danger necessarily attending the trip in search of the animals must certainly prevent any wholesale slaughter. Besides, the immense extent and difficult nature of the region in which they are found will always be a great protection to them. No intelligent estimate can possibly be formed of their present numbers. The party were absent from camp on the trip 21 days, getting back safely about the first of December. The weather was very bad and stormy while they were out, and the loads were so heavy both going and returning and the pace so slow that some of the dogs froze to death on the return trip. From the camp they went on to Fort Resolution which they reached about Christmas.

Mr. Pike spent the remainder of the winter until the month of May in hunting deer in the vicinity of Fort Resolution, and in making a trip after wood buffalo westward from Fort Resolution to the direct line of the Hay river. In company with some Indian hunters he found a band of eight buffalo, of which he killed one. He believes the wood buffalo to be the same as the bison of the plains, but grown a little larger on account of having better food and less travel and the color of the robe a little darker on account of its being less bleached by the sun and winds of the prairie. The Indians seem inclined to protect rather than destroy the wood buffalo, as killing one would mean they would be killed. Their numbers are unknown, and Mr. Pike thinks that they are generally under-estimated. They are found in various parts of the vast region between the Athabasca, Peace and Liard rivers, a country unexplored and unknown, and the fact that bulls are often seen is far evidence that they exist in considerable numbers.

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Further notice is hereby given that no compensation will be allowed for any improvements that may be found on any portion of the said Reserve at time of sale thereof.

By order of
The Supt. Gen'l of Indian Affairs,
(Sgd.) HAYTER REED,
Commissioner of Indian Affairs,
for Man. and N. W. T.

Regina,
June 9th, 1890.

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